

REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed December 28, 2006, claims 1 and 11 were "objected to" for informalities; claims 1-33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph; claims 1, 8-10, 19, 32 and 33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by either Shirakuma (U.S. Patent No. 4,432,698) or Nishida (JP 9-4548); claims 1, 8-10, 17-19, 32 and 33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Caillat (U.S. Patent No. 6,206,652); and "objected to" claims 2-7, 11-16 and 20-31 contain allowable subject matter. The foregoing objections and rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claims 2, 8, 9, 11, 32 and 33 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1 and 10 have been amended to include the features of cancelled "objected to" claims 2 and 11, respectively. Minor amendments have been made to claims 3, 5, 7, 12, 16, 17, 20, 24, 25, 27, 28 and 30.

Claims 1, 3-7, 10 and 12-31 are currently pending and under consideration. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Objections to claims 1 and 11:

Claim 1 has been amended. Support for the amendment to claim 1 can be found at paragraph [0025] of the specification. The term "operation" recited in cancelled "objected to" claim 11 has been replaced with "operate". As mentioned above, the features of cancelled claim 11 have been incorporated into independent claim 10.

112 rejections of claims 1-33:

As mentioned above, claim 32 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1 and 23 have been amended. Support for the amendment to claims 1 and 23 can be found at paragraph [0030] of the specification and FIG. 2, for example.

Therefore, withdrawal of the 112 rejections is respectfully requested.

102(b) rejection of claims 1, 8-10, 17-19, 32 and 33:

As mentioned above, claims 8, 9, 32 and 33 have been cancelled. Independent claims 1 and 10 have been amended to include the allowable subject matter of "objected to" claims 2 and 11, respectively.

Therefore, claims 1, 3-7, 10 and 12-31 should now be in condition for allowance.

Thus, withdrawal of the rejections and objections is respectfully requested.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

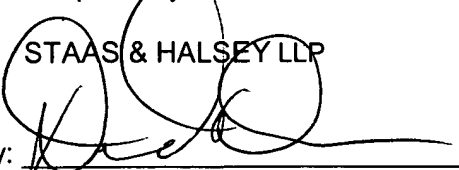
Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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